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Viewing cable 08USUNNEWYORK1177, UNGA COMMEMORATES UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08USUNNEWYORK1177**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08USUNNEWYORK1177	2008-12-17 10:38	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	USUN New York

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758464.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4041/millones-de-dolares-sin-control-y-a-discrecion>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2757244.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>

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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5539

INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 1734

RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU PRIORITY 0164

RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 0615

RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 1978

RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY 0128

RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 1352

RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 1994

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 3464

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA AND IO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/16/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [AG](#) [MO](#) [IS](#) [NU](#) [UNGA](#)

SUBJECT: UNGA COMMEMORATES UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Classified By: AMBASSADOR T. VANCE MCMAHAN FOR 1.4(B,D).

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The UN General Assembly (UNGA) marked the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in New York on December 10. Despite some initial uncertainty about which states would be permitted to speak, the commemoration, which included two panel discussions and a plenary meeting, proceeded smoothly. Speakers agreed that while much had been achieved since the adoption of the UDHR, much remained to be done, and the UN needed to respond to new challenges presented by the global financial, food, and energy crises, climate change, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor resulting in higher poverty levels. In addition to touching upon the more traditional rights, speakers focused on "new" human rights including the right to development and the right to water, and emphasized that equal attention needed to be given to economic, social and cultural rights as to civil and political rights. The United States made a statement in our capacity as the "Host Country." Israel spoke on behalf of the Western European and Others Group (WEOG). END SUMMARY

¶2. (C) During the December 10 UDHR commemorative plenary meeting, the UNGA adopted by consensus a Declaration on the anniversary of the UDHR. Five countries, one from each region, co-authored the draft of a Declaration marking the 60th anniversary of the UDHR: Algeria (Africa), Indonesia (Asia), Argentina (Latin America), Germany (WEOG, which includes the United States), and Azerbaijan (Eastern Europe). The Declaration maintained a generalized, laudatory tone while avoiding specific enumerations of controversial documents or situations. The UNGA also adopted by consensus the Third Committee resolution which took note of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

¶3. (C) During his opening statement, Miguel d'Escoto (Nicaragua), the President of the General Assembly (PGA), called for adherence to the values enshrined in the UDHR at this point in history "marked by the maniacal, suicidal selfishness of an increasingly discredited system aimed at the ever-increasing concentration of wealth and power." He outlined a number of phenomena which "we cannot tolerate," including poverty, hunger, trafficking in persons, deforestation, torture, and foreign military bases established in sovereign nations. The PGA also called for democratization of the UN, stating "All dictatorships must end, including dictatorship in this house." These remarks were in keeping with the PGA's efforts to prevent Israel,

Morocco and the United States from taking the floor during the commemoration, in direct contravention of established procedures (see below). While his maneuvers were perceived both in the press and by delegations as a slight towards Israel, which held the monthly rotation as WEOG chair in December, his actions were also apparently aimed at Morocco (the monthly African group chair) at the instigation of Algeria.

¶4. (C) Seven recipients were presented with Human Rights Awards, including Ramsey Clark, former U.S. Attorney General and defense attorney for Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic. The winners were chosen by a committee headed by PGA D'Escoto and comprised of the Human Rights Council (HRC) President, the Economic and Social Council President, the Chair of the Committee on the Status of Women, and the Chair of the Advisory Committee of the HRC (a Cuban). The other recipients were Human Rights Watch, Louise Arbour, Dr. Denis Mukwege, Dr. Carolyn Gomes and, posthumously, Benazir Bhutto and Sister Dorothy Stang. The seven recipients were chosen from over 150 nominations provided by governments, NGOs and individuals after an opaque and secretive vetting process from which the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was marginalized.

¶5. (U) On December 5, after first announcing no Member States would be allowed to speak at the commemoration, the PGA reversed himself and scheduled the five regional groups to speak at the end of the meeting, after the award ceremony and the formal adoption of the Optional Protocol on Economic, Social and Cultural rights. The usual practice for such commemorations, however, as codified by the General Committee

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of the UNGA, is for speeches to be made by the chairmen of the Regional Groups and by the Host Country. Under protest from the USUN, the PGA reluctantly added the host country back onto the agenda, but said Cuba, as coordinator of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), would also be added. Once word of this departure from normal procedure became known, other groups also requested a speaking role. Ultimately nine additional groups spoke in addition to the five regions and the Host Country: the African Union (Tanzania), the European Union (EU) (France), the NAM (Cuba), the Arab States (Egypt), the Rio Group (Mexico), MERCOSUR (Brazil), Nordic Countries (Iceland), CANZ (Canada), and CARICOM (Guyana). Morocco (speaking for Africa), Colombia (speaking for Latin America and the Caribbean), and Cuba (speaking for the NAM), stressed the importance of the right to development. Egypt (speaking for the Arab States) and Cuba (speaking for the NAM) underscored the rights of persons in territories under foreign occupation, with Egypt calling for the international community to divest itself of "selectivity, politicization and double standards," and to reiterate commitment to supporting the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. Despite our prior misgivings, the speeches at the event were less inflammatory than had been anticipated.

¶6. (U) Other speakers included the HRC President, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and (by video message) Secretary-General Ban. Speakers agreed that the lack of political will on the part of some to make the UDHR principles a reality remained a problem. They also agreed that the global financial, food, and energy crises were presenting new challenges on the human rights front, which required international cooperation. Virtually every speaker expressed concern about the widening poverty gap, noting that poverty led to exploitation and abuse. Many speakers emphasized the need to give as much attention to economic, social, and cultural rights as given to civil and political rights.

¶7. (U) The December 10 UDHR commemorative events also included panel discussions on lessons learned and on challenges ahead and the way forward. Panelists agreed that

there had been much progress achieved since the adoption of the UDHR, but that rights continued to be violated around the world, and human rights education would be key to moving forward. Former Irish President and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson expressed concerns related to the fight against terrorism and secret detention. The representatives of Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International echoed similar concerns, though their comments were not as heated as Robinson's.

¶18. (U) In addition to touching upon the more traditional rights, speakers focused on a number of "new" rights which they argued merited equal attention, namely the right to development and the right to water. Panelist Maude Barlow, a water rights activist, made the point that water must be viewed as a human right rather than a commodity, arguing that it should be a free public good. A few speakers noted that some developed countries were more focused on addressing human rights problems in other countries than those within their own borders, and Syria raised the need to protect the human rights of persons living in territories under foreign occupation.

¶19. (U) A fuller reflection of the debate during the panel discussions and the UNGA plenary meeting can be found at www.un.org/apps/pressreleases. The complete text of the U.S. statement can be found at www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov.
Khalilzad